# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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#### THE SECRETARY'S PAGE

HELPS AND HINTS IN SEASON.

#### The Trade Union Act.

For certain good reasons we have not this month published our proposed articles on the coming Joint Campaign in which the whole Movement is to engage later in the Autumn. By the time our next issue is due the Trades Union Congress will have given a lead to the whole Movement, and our own references and hints on the coming campaign are best deferred until the official kick-off has been made. the same reason we have to hold over the article promised us by Mr. Egerton P. Wake. Many of our readers will be already aware that the machinery of the late campaign is to be maintained and developed for use in the great membership crusade which is presently to follow, but we feel that as no step forward is likely for some weeks the attention we shall give to this matter is better reserved till the holiday season is entirely out of the way. We shall therefore deal with the subject in our September issue.

#### Facts for Leaflets.

On many occasions leaflets and "tags" come to our notice in which figures or statements have been used, which in our opinion would have been better for verification before publication. We do not make any general complaint of inaccuracy, but figures used have sometimes been understated and in other cases overstated, probably due to the fact that the local leaflet writer has either relied on memory or figures taken from out-ofdate publications. We ourselves when issuing election leaflets or similar matter make a practice never to use figures unless they have passed through research. In other words, if we want statistics we get them from the various national bodies which have been set up for research and information work. The up-to-date secretary will, of course, have his latest handbooks or year books, etc., and will have got his Party to subscribe to "Notes for Speakers," issued by the departments referred to. With these matters he is much better armed than the man who relies on memory or having seen something

"somewhere in print." We have been particularly struck this month with the adaptability of the "Notes for Speakers" published by the Trade Union Congress and Labour Party for July 29th and August 5th. These two numbers are particularly adaptable for local secretaries in search of ammunition for their local leaflets or publications. The two numbers deal with the record of the Tory Government in the recent Parliamentary session, and this is just the right stuff to fire in during the next few weeks. The statements and figures here have passed through research, and therefore they may be relied upon. Equally we would recommend the "Labour Bulletin" for August for an attack on the Liberals. Six pages are devoted to an authoritative summary of facts concerning the sale of honours, being a continuation of what appeared in a previous issue. The matter is most illuminating. So, too, is the voting record of the Liberal Party, published in the same issue of the "Bulletin," while if one is requiring figures concerning wages, prices, employment, trades disputes or recent profits, as usual a fund of information is available; not to mention a summary of other statistics culled from official sources. In issuing printed matter Local Parties cannot be too careful, and they should make full use of the national services, which provide them with ascertained facts.

#### The Chart Fiend.

Have you met the chart fiend? We mean the man or woman, excellent comrades in their way whose service to the Movement consists in drawing up charts concerning everything in the Party's progress, and particularly charts during an election, purporting to show the progress of canvassing, organisation and similar things. We know people who immediately they get in a Committee Room begin to decorate the walls with more or less artistic and imposing data on cardboard, which would be magnificent if only it was war. But the end of these charts in most places is like the rake's progress, they degenerate and degener-

ate till when polling day comes they are found to be not a little bit of good at all. Mind, we are not decrying graphic work in general nor the legitimate use of see-at-a-glance methods of indicating meetings, But we feel speakers and so forth. that some people would like to introduce into Committee Rooms an elaboration which is not suited to the practical business of electioneering. What we want in election rooms is certainly order and method, but not complication, nor a display of information too readily grasped by a visitor. We prefer records on sheets to records on walls. For one of the arts of elec-tioneering, as in real warfare, is to practise secrecy and surprise. When practise secrecy and surprise. everyone knows your plans it is just a little easier for them to be defeated; but what is a more practical objection perhaps is that time is wasted drawing needless charts and time is wasted craning one's neck to read themespecially when, as so often happens, they are not kept up to date.

Filing "L.O." Articles.

Many of our readers, we know, have carefully preserved their "Labour Organisers," and frequently refer to the We recently back or bound copies. found Mr. Hinley Atkinson, of Birmingham, adopting a very scientific plan for reference to back articles. Articles of a kindred character, or published by us in serial form, have been cut from their issues and pasted on cardboard to be filed in subject order. Thus, at a moment's notice, Mr. Atkinson is able to turn up all our articles on registration, election expenses, bazaar promotion, finance, etc., etc. Cards of a uniform size are, of course, used, but we were specially interested in the method of pasting adopted. The usual thing would be to paste the columns flat on to the card and use probably three or four cards for the same number of our pages. An improvement on this is made by cutting each column to its exact column width and then gumming down the left-hand edge only. The column therefore hinges on this half-inch strip, and the succeeding column is similarly pasted under the first column, and lies nearly covered by it, and so on to the full extent of the card. By this means much more matter can be carried on one card, and the same is readily readable, for after perusing the first column one turns it over as one does the leaf of a book and reads on to the next.

## LABOUR AGENTS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

It has been arranged that the Annual Conference of the National Association of Labour Registration and Election Agents will take place at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday, October 2nd, probably in the Labour Hall, Winifred Street, Black-

The headquarters of the Agents' Association during the Conference week will be at the Central Pier House, Blackpool, immediately Promenade, opposite the Central Pier and within easy access of the Hippodrome, at which the Party Conference will take place. Those desiring to put up at this centre are requested to make immediate bookings for accommodation required. At Margate there was some disappointment because all who desired it were unable to secure accommodation at the last moment at the agents' headquarters.

### THE "LABOUR WOMAN" FOR AUGUST.

The "Labour Woman" for August contains some fine illustrations, including a very notable one of the Stadium, Prague, during the recent Workers' Olympiad, which the Right Hon. F. O. Roberts, M.P., describes in an article. There are some very good pictures of special demonstrations of women during Women's Month, and the two women prospective Labour candidates whose pictures are given are Dr. Marion Phillips (Sunderland) and Ruby Part (Wells).

Susan Lawrence, M.P., gives a very lively account of the House of Lords controversy, and an article by Rennie Smith, M.P., discusses the position of disarmament.

The Children's Drawings give generous representations of cricket and tennis, and there is the usual budget of domestic and child welfare notes.

The Editor, in her monthly letter, compares the conditions in the Labour town of Sheffield with Tory-ridden Sunderland.

GREAT REDUCTION in Portable Open-air Speakers' Platforms.—For particulars and illustrations, apply to H. W. Bingley, 106, Dunlace Road, Clapton Park, E.5.

#### OUT OF THE RUT

Ideas and Activities in Brief.

connection with the Labour Party's Agricultural Policy Campaign the National E.C. have authorised the organisation of a campaign of Conference meetings in rural and county constituencies during the coming autumn and winter. The object of the campaign is to interest members of the Party in the agricultural policy adopted at the Margate Conference, and to reach every possible man and woman interested in agriculture who may be won over to support the Party and its programme. The Movement is now fairly acquainted with what have come to be known as Conference meetings or Demonstration Conferences where delegates are invited on a fairly liberal basis, with the object of getting as far as possible a rank and file attendance to hear points of policy explained and difficulties answered.

Arrangements are at present proceeding for booking up fixtures in the class of Division mentioned and Divisional Labour Parties have been requested to apply for dates. National Headquarters are to pay the out-of-pocket expenses of the speakers, and Divisional Labour Parties undertaking to organise a conference are to bear the other necessary expenses of organisation. It is proposed that the series of meetings should commence immediately after the Annual Conference of

the Party at Blackpool.

The Party make the following suggestions in relation to these meetings:—

1. Every available organisation in the constituency ought to be invited to appoint delegates so that official reports can be made.

2. Every member of the Party in the constituency ought to be invited to attend the Conference Meeting and to take part.

3. An invitation ought to be sent to farmers in the constituency to attend, either through the Farmers' Union or

individually.

4. Advertisements making known the Conference Meetings ought to be issued and a general invitation thereby extended to the public to attend the Conference Meetings.

5. The Parliamentary Labour candidate for the Division or some influential person ought to be invited to take the chair.

6. The Conference Meeting ought to be opened by a statement from the speaker allotted from headquarters. This statement to be followed by questions and discussion. A carefully drawn up time-table ought to be followed.

 Every attempt should be made to enrol members of the Party and enlist their aid in support of the Agricultural

Policy of the Party.

8. Orders for literature on agriculture ought to be sent to headquarters and special arrangements for the sale at the Conference Meetings should be made.

9. A collection ought to be taken to

bear expenses.

The Miles Platting Divisional Labour Party have been celebrating the completion by the Right Hon. J. R. Clynes, M.P., of 21 years' service as Parliamentary representative for the Division. In connection with the celebration an elegant souvenir has been published well worthy of the occasion. Those who remember the Parliamentary successes of 1906, and the succeeding flood of photographs of the then uncommon Labour M.P.s will be interested to note the centre reproductions of Mr. Clynes' photograph in 1906 and the present day. There is a noticeable maturing of expression which cannot but strike the observer. The souvenir has an interesting outline of the career of Miles Platting's distinguished member. A photograph of Mrs. Clynes also graces its pages.

The Rugby and New Bilton Labour Party (this is not the D.L.P.) are again to be congratulated on a really successful financial year. Most Parties found it difficult to pay their way during the last twelve months owing to the distresses and industrial upheavals of the period covered, but, due mostly to its admirable system for the collection of contributions, Rugby shows an increased bank balance at the close of the accounts. The sum of cash in hand is £325 3s. 7d., there being practically no liabilities to set against this sum. Collections from individual members reach the sum of £90 4s., apart from collections for the miners' relief fund amounting to £119 5s. 11d.

We are interested to note that Wallsend Division Labour Party (Miss MarIS YOUR AGENT A MEMBER of the

# National Association of Labour Registration and Election Agents?

(Acts as the Trade Union for Labour Organisers)

General Secretary: H. DRINKWATER, Fernhill Heath, near Worcester.

garet Bondfield's constituency) issues an octavo monthly circular which is printed and runs to several pages. The issue before us contains a message from Miss Bondfield, M.P., a report by the Organiser (Mr. Claude Denscombe), and sundry news concerning the activities of the Party in various wards and urban districts. It tells a story of continued progress. The monthly circular is a thing well worth imitation.

The season for outdoor meetings is by no means over yet and particularly where Municipal Elections are taking place will there be a call for more outdoor work. Because of this we wish to commend the strongly-built and serviceable portable platforms advertised in the "L.O." by Mr. H. W. Bingley, of 106 Dunlace Road, Clapton Park, London, E.5. A good many of Mr. Bingley's platforms are doing excellent service in the movement. The price has been considerably reduced and platforms are real good value for the money. Apart from this, a portable platform is a very real advantage at outdoor meetings over the improvised soapbox or borrowed kitchen chair. It attracts attention and is altogether more comfortable for the speaker and conducive to a successful meeting.

"Tories and the House of Lords: An Exposure of their Trickery" is a new penny pamphlet by the Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., published by the Labour Party. It is attractively got up and is quite pre-war value in pamphlet, apart from the special authoritativeness of its contents. This pamphlet should prove a good seller. A hundred can be obtained for 6/- carriage paid, and it will be a poor party which cannot get rid of 100 penny pamphlets written by the first Labour Prime Minister. A Horrabin cartoon

on the front page helps to make the pamphlet noticeable on the bookstall.

Another recent pamphlet is "The Labour Party and the Nursing Profession." This is a threepenny pamphlet, and it contains a report outlining Labour's policy with regard to nursing. This pamphlet should certainly be stocked and brought to the notice of members of the nursing and medical profession as well as the public health authorities and Labour members on County and Local Councils in all districts.

# THE LATEST R.P. CIRCULAR Earlier Publication of the Register?

A circular dated August 7th has been issued to the Registration Officers from the Home Office relatregistration to the current work. The bulk of the circular is of no interest to our readers, being concerned solely with technical details concerning the communications between Registration Officers and the Record Offices over absent voters, and there is a further paragraph relating to the dispatch of summaries of the register The to the Regiscrar-General. paragraph of vital concern to readers is reprinted below, and it will be noted that facilities are urged for the early publication of the register in order to convenience those engaged in Municipal Elections.

"The Registration Officer is reminded that, as pointed out under Heading 4 in the circular of 31st March last, expedition is essential in sending to the printers the copy for printing off the Register. In order to facilitate the preparation of the copy, the Registration Officer will no doubt have considered whether his Revision Sittings might not be held at somewhat earlier

dates than formerly.

"It is desired also to call attention to the suggestion in previous circulars that the Register, particularly for municipal boroughs, where the elections take place on the 1st November, should be made available to agents of political organisations and others before it comes into force. The Secretary of State trusts that the Registration Officer will be able to make arrangements for the printing of the register to be expedited so that copies may be supplied to those desiring them by the 1st October or as soon as possible thereafter."

#### THE LABOUR YEAR BOOK FOR 1927.

The Labour Year Book for 1927 has just been issued by the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. It is indispensable to Party agents and local secretaries. In addition to the usual sections which have already established the Year Book as an indispensable reference book to everyone interested in the Labour Movement, the 1927 edition has the following important sections :-

COAL AND POWER.—An exhaustive study of the world resources of coal and the present state of the coal, gas and electricity industries in Great Britain and other industries. Water power is

also dealt with.

GENERAL STOPPAGE AND THE MINING DISPUTE, 1926.—A concise history of the

whole of this eventful period.

CHINA AND THE POWERS.—Latest statistics of trade of China with other countries; origins of the present situation in China; full text of the diplomatic other correspondence between China and Great Britain and other Powers

THE TORY GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-TRADE Union Bill.—A complete copy of the text of the Bill, together with a Labour barrister's interpretation of its meaning, and an explanation of the significance of the amendments made during the passage through Parliament, together with a record of the resistance offered to the Bill by Labour in Parliament and an account of the campaign of opposition organised by the Movement in the country.

The Labour Year Book would norm-

ally have been issued earlier in the year, but its publication has been deferred in order to include some of these special sections, especially that dealing with the Anti-Trade Union Bill as amended in Committee. This delay we believe to be justified by the importance of the new contents. As the Right Hon. F. O. Roberts, Chairman of the Labour Party Executive, states in a Foreword: "Few periods in the history Labour Movement have more eventful than that which is covered in this sixth edition of the Labour Year Book. It has been a period of true Toryism, characterised by continuous attacks on the workers at home and by attempts to cover these up with dangerous armed excursions abroad."

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### REVISION "COURTS": WHAT THEY ARE.

A Useful Article For Beginners.

The writer well remembers many years ago his first appearance in a Revising Barrister's Court. Perhaps that cold and frigid reception was not undiluted with curiosity as to how a young and unpaid enthusiast had succeeded in putting in nearly double the claims of the Liberal and Tory agents put together. But the experience which was to follow of fighting hard for these claims against old and experienced Registration Agents armed with ponderous tomes and instances of which the writer had never heard, was, after all, something really enjoyed and something to be remembered. It is therefore with a deep fellow-feeling for the young beginner that one pens this article.

Revision Courts fortunately are not what they are. And, paradoxically, "there ain't no sich thing." But we will come to that presently. Prior to 1918 the man who entered Revision Courts really required some smattering of legal knowledge and certainly a mastery of a good deal of intricate Franchise Law. Many heavy volumes were published on Registration, and hundreds of decided cases went to swell the law on such subjects as correcting misdescriptions; lodgings; franchise; disqualifications; occupation; freeholds; sufficiency of description; etc., etc. Registration work was, in fact, a job for thoroughly trained men, and even for these the pitfalls were many.

Changed indeed are the present times when it can be said that Registration is so simple that no one has found sufficient material on which to base a book on decided cases.

Revision Courts, too, in pre-1918 days were elaborate Statutory Courts, with a Revising Barrister and wig to wit. The Revising Barrister was required to be one of not less than 7 years standing, and was in many cases the Recorder for his city or borough. He was paid 250 guineas per annum, and his duties were laid down fairly precisely. He was to hold his Courts between September 8th and October 12th, and in certain places he was compelled to hold at least one evening sitting. Strict provisions were made for the preservation of order and the presence of police at the sitting of the Court. A "Court" it was in the real sense of the word.

But the Representation of the People Act, 1918, altered all this. Revising Barristers were abolished and, incidentally, they received compensation for deprivation of their fees. Revision Courts as formerly understood were also. abolished, and the Acts of Parliament under which they were set up were all repealed. Strictly speaking, then, there are no Revision Courts, and no reference to them will be found either in the Representation of the People Act or in any of the amending Acts or the rules and regulations published thereunder. What takes place are "revision sit-tings" or "proceedings on the consideration of claims and objections" perhaps not much difference in the terms, but considerable difference in the fact that no definite procedure is laid down, no skilled lawyer sits at the head, police are not specifically required to attend, and no evening sittings are expressly ordered. What undoubtedly was present to the minds of our legislators was that the new Act was intended to so simplify registration that matters arising could only be matters of fact on which an easy ascertainment might be made. Probably they overlooked the ingenuity of registration agents or the never-failing ambiguity of legal phraseology.

ambiguity of legal phraseology.

It should be understood quite clearly that a Registration Officer need not hold a revision sitting unless he has claims that are contested or any objections. Under Registration Rule 21, if he considers that a claim may be allowed without further enquiry, the Registration Officer has power to allow same without a public sitting on giving notice to the claimant that his claim is allowed. But if he is not satisfied he is required to give five clear days' notice of the time and place at which the claim will be considered by him. This time and place, of course, are "the sittings."

and place, of course, are "the sittings." If there are objections, the Registration Officer is bound to hold a sitting, and this provision is very important. It reads as follows:—

"The Registration Officer shall, as soon as practicable, consider all objections of which notice has been given to him in accordance with these rules, and, for that purpose shall give at least five clear days' notice to the objector and to the person in respect of whose registration the notice of objection has been given,

of the time and place at which the objection will be considered by him." It will be convenient here to see what other powers the Registration Officer possesses when the sittings take place. So far we have seen that he must give five clear days' notice to an objector and to the person whose registration is objected to. He must also give notice of a hearing to a person whose claim he is not satisfied with. By rule 22 the Officer is instructed that "If on the consideration of any claim or objection it appears to the Registration Officer that the claimant, or person in respect of whose name objection is taken, is not entitled to be entered on the register in the character in which he claims to be registered, or in which he is entered on the list, but is entitled to be entered on the register in another character or in another place on the register, the Registration Officer may decide that the name of that person shall be so entered on the register."

The Registration Officer also has power to make such additions and corrections in the electors' lists, including the absent voters' list, as are required to carry out his decisions on any objections or claims, and he is instructed (the Act says shall) to make such corrections by way of the removal of duplicate entries, the removal of "deads," or those subject to legal incapacities, as are required; he must also place certain marks, or correct marks already made, against the names of electors as he thinks necessary in order to secure that no person is registered as a Parliamentary elector or a Local Government elector improperly.

In this article we are presuming that our reader has already mastered the elements of the Franchise, and understands who ought to be registered or who ought or ought not to be removed from the register in respect of a duplicate entry. It will clear matters to explain that no person must be registered as a Parliamentary elector in respect of more than one qualification in the same constituency or as a Local Government elector in respect of more than one qualification (a) in the same Borough for the purpose of Borough Council elections, or (b) in the same electoral division or ward for the purposes of County Council, Metropolitan Borough Council and Urban District Council elections, or (c) in the same parish or ward of a parish for the purpose of Rural District Council, Guardians or Parish elections.

It will be seen from the above that the Registration Officer has pretty extensive powers of revision, but where the Registration Officer makes any correction otherwise than in pursuance of a claim or objection (or merely of correcting a clerical error), he is required to give notice to the person affected by the correction, and let that person have an opportunity of objecting, and, if necessary, being heard respecting thereto.

So there then we have got the Registration Officer's powers. The next point is where our Local Labour Party secretary or registration agent comes in. It will have been seen that a claimant, an objector, or a person objected to, all possess rights of appearance at the sittings, but in practice the whole procedure of claim and objection centres round rule 39 of the Registration Rules which reads:—

"On the consideration of any claim or objection or other matter by the Registration Officer, any person appearing to the Registration Officer to be interested may appear and be heard either in person or by any other person, other than counsel, on his behalf."

Here we have an instruction giving wide liberties to appear and be heard at the sittings. Whoever is appointed by the Local Labour Party may under this clause attend the whole of the proceedings, and, in our opinion, notice given under this clause to the Registration Officer can compel him to do the whole work of revision and of duplicates and marking of names in public. Not that it is always necessary or desirable that this should be done, but the power is there, and though, as we have said, a Registration Officer having no objections and being satisfied with the claims is not compelled to hold a Court, any notice that a person desired to be present would compel him (the Registration Officer) to a public

Now with regard to conduct at the sittings. A representative who holds no brief for claims and who has made no objections has very little to do, though he has a locus standi in all matters of fact which may be questioned before the officer. But we hope most Labour appearances at the Revision sittings are the sequel to placing a number of claims and objections. Without doubt our opponents will be represented, too. The royal road to success in the Revision Courts

is to be truthful and honest in every dealing with the Registration Officer. It is no credit to have dodged through by false representation an improper claim, and if not at this sitting then at some future sitting a person who has a reputation for deceiving the Registration Officer will find the hour has come to regret it.

A record for scrupulous honesty of purpose is a sound asset to the registration agent. When a real doubt exists, more often than not he gets the benefit of it if his word can be taken, and it is he who avoids the ignominious result which awaits the trickster of being found out.

Few people, we suppose, will appear in a revision court on behalf of the Party without first knowing the Registration Officer and having met that gentleman in connection with sending in claims. If an interview can be secured with the Officer before the sittings many useful points can be discussed and matter often disposed cf. Meetings with the other Party representatives are sometimes suggested by the opponent's agents themselves. It is advisable to accept any invitation of this kind to talk over claims and objections, and frequently a measure of agreement can be reached which will avoid much

quibbling at the sittings.

There is a common custom of agreeing upon quite clear cases and referring others to the report of two canvassers appointed jointly by the agents-or if the case is actually before the Registration Officer, of the Officer's canvasser and one belonging to the agents. It is well for the beginner to know that in these matters there must be a certain degree of give and take. The Registration Officer is usually courtesy itself, and where it is necessary to be firm in pressing a case, that firmness should not develop into defiance or want of deference. In most cases it is evidence and not feeling that weighs in the matter. So, too, with one's opponents. Urbanity is a firm asset, and it doesn't do to get ruffled if an opponent agent comes out with a wild challenge to one's claim or objection. The facts must be found out, and if your claim is not based on fact then there is no sympathy for you in this article.

It is bad policy to contest the report of any canvassers appointed by agreement. Only a very strong personal knowledge that facts are not as they are reported should tempt a representative to challenge a report.

Finally, we would say to the beginner: be in time for the commencement of proceedings; listen carefully to the Registration Officer as he outlines the course he will take. Attend with an assistant more orderly if possible than yourself, who will see that you are supplied to begin with the proper lists in the order in which they will be taken, and then with the full written facts of each case in which you are personally interested, ready at the moment that the case is reached. Every alteration made by the Registration Officer should be noted on your own copy, and every claim or objection entered for the result at the time the decision is given.

Legal points do not arise very often, but if you suspect some point will arise endeavour to be prepared. Don't speak too soon on any case, and never too long, and if there is a legal point to be urged, rely as far as possible on the language of the text-books or of the law, and leave it at that. In cases where knowledge is wanted there is usually a Labour Agent in a neighbouring town who will help you with advice, or there is the Head Office of the Party and its Regional Officers, whose services can be commanded in time. If a question of appeal arises, be sure of the facts and remember the time is short.

## AGENCY CHANGES AND NEW APPOINTMENTS.

#### Death of Mr. Tom Gibb.

We deeply regret to announce the death of Mr. Tom Gibb, Labour Agent for the Sheffield Central Division, whose funeral took place on Saturday, 30th July. Mr. Gibb's whole life had been spent in the Labour and Socialist Movement. He was appointed Labour Agent to Sheffield Central Division in March last, and had previously acted as agent in other constituencies, notably at Morpeth, where he was election agent to Mr. R. Smillie, M.P., in the by-election which brought Mr. Smillie into Parliament. Mr. Gibb was extremely popular among his fellow agents and throughout the Movement, and his many friends will deeply regret to hear of his passing.

Wimbledon. — Mr. H. Hailstone, formerly part-time agent at East Grinstead, has been appointed fulltime agent at Wimbledon. He commences duties on 27th August. Present address: 12, Railway Approach, East Grinstead.

Westmorland.—Mr. W. Hall, of 33, Castle Street, Westmorland, has been appointed Labour agent in this constituency, commencing duties on the 27th June, 1927.

Norwich.—Mr. E. F. Dean, 12, Wymer Street, Norwich, Norfolk, has been appointed Labour agent in this constituency. He commenced

duties on 1st July.

Batley (Yorks).—Mr. E. G. Brown, formerly part-time agent at Chatham, has been appointed full-time agent for the Batley Division, and will take up duties about the middle of September. Present address: Labour Rooms, High Street, Chatham, Kent.

#### CHANGES OF ADDRESSES.

Mr. G. Hindle (Warrington Division): General Workers' Office, Town Hill, Warrington.

Mr. W. E. Longden (Macclesfield Division): 76, Derby Street, Maccles-

field.

Mr. W. M. Rogerson (Eccles Division): Green Bank, 140, Trafford Road, Eccles, Manchester.

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#### LAW AND PRACTICE.

#### Bribery.

There is no uglier offence at any election than the offence of bribery. It is an offence stigmatised both by moral law and the legal code as the most debasing act of which any candidate or person might be guilty in connection with an election. It is a tribute to the existing standard of political conduct that the offence is rarely brought to light, and has been stamped out in most constituencies. At the same time, it would be contrary to the writer's experience and to common knowledge in certain constituencies to say that bribery either as a general thing or a specific act is non-existent, even in its crudest forms.

The legislature has been at considerable pains to isolate and define the various acts which constitute the legal offence of bribery, but in practice, in addition to the offence as defined, there is a condition in the conduct of elections known as "general bribery," which, quite apart from specific acts of bribery, renders the election null and void. A candidate may actually have been guiltless by himself or by his agent of bribery, but if it has been proved that the other side bribe, and that his side bribed, each to such an extent as to constitute "general" or extensive bribery, in that case the law holds that there has been no free election; and though the successful candidate may be personally exonerated, and able to stand again, the election may be nullified.

What, however, most concerns the average electioneer, is the legal definition and the offences which are charged as bribery, and are punishable as such.

The definition of bribery as laid down by law for the last 70 years runs as

follows:-

"The following persons shall be deemed guilty of bribery, and shall be

punishable accordingly:-

"1. Every person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other person on his behalf, give, lend, or agree to give or lend, or shall offer, promise, or promise to procure or to endeavour to procure any money, or valuable consideration, to or for any voter, or to or for any person on behalf of any voter, or to or for any other person in order to induce any voter to vote, or refrain from voting, or shall corruptly do any such act as aforesaid,

on account of such voter having voted or refrained from voting at any elec-

"2. Every person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself or by any other person on his behalf, give or procure, or agree to give or procure, or offer, promise, or promise to procure or to endeavour to procure, any office, place, or employment to or for any voter, or to or for any person on behalf of any voter, or to or for any other person, in order to induce such voter to vote, or refrain from voting or shall corruptly do any such act as aforesaid, on account of any voter having voted or refrained from voting at any election:

"3. Every person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself or by any other person on his behalf, make any such gift, loan, offer, promise, procurement, or agreement as aforesaid, to or for any person, in order to induce such person to procure or endeavour to procure, the return of any person to serve in parliament, or the vote of any voter at any election;

"4. Every person who shall, upon or in consequence of any such gift, loan, offer, promise, procurement, or agreement, procure or engage, promise, or endeavour to procure the return of any person to serve in parliament, or the vote of any voter at any election;

"5. Every person who shall advance or pay, or cause to be paid, any money to or to the use of any other person with the intent that such money or any part thereof shall be expended in bribery at any election, or who shall knowingly pay or cause to be paid any money to any person in discharge or repayment of any money wholly or in part expended in bribery at any election;

"Provided always, that the aforesaid enactment shall not extend or be construed to extend to any money paid or agreed to be paid for or on account of any legal expenses bona fide incurred at or concerning any election."

"The following persons shall also be deemed guilty of bribery, and shall be

punishable accordingly:-

"(1) Every voter who shall, before or during any election, directly or indirectly, by himself or by any other person on his behalf, receive, agree, or contract for any money, gift, loan, or valuable consideration, office, place, or employment, for himself or for any other person, for voting or agreeing to vote, or for refraining or agreeing to refrain from voting at any election;

"(2) Every person who shall, after any election, directly or indirectly by himself or by any other person on his behalf, receive any money or valuable consideration on account of any person having voted or refrained from voting, or having induced any other person to vote or refrain from voting at any elec-

"Any person, either directly or indirectly, corruptly paying any rate on behalf of any ratepayer for the purpose of enabling him to be registered as a voter, thereby to influence his vote at any future election, and any candidate or other person, either directly or indirectly, paying any rate on behalf of any voter for the purpose of inducing him to vote or refrain from voting, shall be guilty of bribery, and be punishable accordingly; and any person on whose behalf and with whose privity any such payment as in this section is mentioned is made, shall also be guilty of bribery, and punishable accordingly."

The very essence of bribery is that it is an attempt to corrupt. The motive is essentially a corrupt one. There is no question of the intention of the briber, or for that matter of the person receiving the bribe, whether it be money or any other of the considerations named. One cannot bribe another to do a thing which he ought to do voluntarily without having in law, and in commonsense, a corrupt motive; neither, on the other hand, can the receiver be held to be free of equally

corrupt intention.

So it is that bribery is a "corrupt practice" and it is expressly enacted in Section 3 of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883, that bribery, as defined, shall be a "corrupt practice." The penalty is :-

1. Twelve months imprisonment with or without hard labour or a fine of

£200.

2. Deprivation of the right of voting for seven years.

3. Removal from and disqualification from any public office.

4. Payment of cost of election enquiry in certain cases.

5. The candidate if guilty loses his seat if elected, and is disqualified from ever representing the constituency.

6. If the offence is committed by any agent the election is void and the candidate is also disqualified for being elected or sitting in the House of Commons for seven years.

We have seen above how almost every conceivable attempt to bribe or receive a bribe is anticipated and for-Yet curiously enough it appears to be no offence if a person merely offers his vote and expresses his willingness to be bribed. The offence must be complete in the sense that he must receive something or be offered something either at the time or at a future date. With such a formidable wire entanglement it is rather strange that the tempter (who is a voter) may go free. But though he may tempt freely, directly he agrees on something the law gets him.

It would seem, too, that no candidate distributing largess in the shape of charitable gifts in his constituency could avoid entangling himself in the meshes of the Act. But judge-made law has made a passage through. And the loophole is the charitable construction which might be placed on a member's or candidate's intentions. There is nothing in any of the above clauses to prohibit a candidate indulging in charitable deeds, and as it is notorious that charity covers a multitude of sins it is equally notorious that persons may and do distribute money and gifts as charity with complete immunity from the penalties for bribery.

Judges have held that it is not illegitimate for a member to benefit his constituency, and the Courts will not draw any adverse influence from the fact that a member confines his charity to his own constituency. They have gone even further and held that where a political agent distributed relief to the poor in a member's constituency such acts were no more bribery because they were done by an agent and not the member himself.

We ourselves know of at least one notorious instance (where Labour has several times missed the seat by a narrow majority) in which gifts and relief are ordinarily distributed by the agent to the sitting member.

All this is very galling to the supporters of a poor candidate, but it must be remembered that whenever there is the slightest offer of any sort of promise, or undertaking, relating to a person's vote, the crime of bribery is complete and the penalties are incurred. The utmost vigilance is desirable in constituencies where the sitting member indulges in charity of the kind indicated in order to bring home the specific offence.

A not uncommon form of bribery is that of employing the person in some capacity without any real consideration by way of services. The writer, in fact, has one recollection of a candidate who many years ago desired him, when acting as his agent, to employ a number of bill distributors, who were to receive 5s. for the day's pay. In his youth he fell for this, quite believing that they were innocent appointments, until he discovered that the bills handed to these men with a "sub" for their wages, had been left on the counter of the outer office!

"Colourable employment" is the term often applied to bribery of this description. The limitation of the number of persons employed for payment makes the offence less easy than it might be, though we are glad that its use nowadays is mostly confined to the "employment" of persons having some influence in their locality, and who are therefore able to account for votes. We have known men, apparently of straw, receive quite a fat figure for their services, such money being passed on in smaller sums through the individual concerned to other people. The offence here is easy of detection, and as the person employed is an "agent" the penalty is one of the highest. But in the case we are thinking of both sides were equally guilty, and it was found afterwards that the clerk with the cushy job had also got one from the other side at a higher figure.

There is a notion still lingering in certain corrupt districts that where the bribe does not exceed two shillings and sixpence it is too trifling to be punishable. In our grandfathers' days this certainly was the case, but the law today will not tolerate this. Still, we know of a certain town where up till the 1918 General Election two shillings and sixpence was the ordinary tariff for the sale of voces.

In concluding this explanation of what is bribery we urge Labour workers never to attempt anything, directly or indirectly, which in the faintest degree could be construed as offering a reward for a vote. Specific benefits accruing to the individual as a citizen as a result of his voting might even be construed as bribery if held out as an inducement to vote. Labour policy demands that elections should be pure, and the law should be carried out both in the letter and in the spirit.

#### LOCAL NEWSPAPER MEMS.

In addition to the local newspapers mentioned in our June issue, we have received recent copies of the following:
"Brentwood Labour Leader," now

published as an eight-page quarto with coloured cover. Address: 29 Western

Road, Brentwood. "The Dawn," the official organ of the Horsham and Worthing Divisional Labour Party. It is based on the "Beacon" series of papers and published as an eight-page monthly. First issue, July, 1927. Address: Editor, Mr. H. O. Freeman, "Gordon House," Swindon

"South Bradford Co-operative and Labour Record." A four-page monthly, No. 8 of which, dated July, 1927, is to hand. Address: Mr. J. Bailey, 65 Sun-

bridge Road, Bradford.

Road, Horsham.

"Wolverhampton Free Press." This we believe is at present a free lance, but of Labour politics, and printed by The Blackfriars Press, Leicester. It is a four-page with a guaranteed distribution of 5,000 copies weekly in Wolverhampton alone. It is priced at one penny. Address: Regent Chambers, Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton.

The "London News." The leading London Labour paper, and the monthly publication of the London Labour Party. Attractively got up and well edited. Address: 258/262 Westminster Bridge

Road, London, S.E.I.

"Finsbury Star," a four-page bimonthly. Address: 295 Goswell Road,

London, E.C.1.

Workers' Monthly," circulating in North and East Hants and West Surrey districts. This paper is now published as a 12-page monthly, illustrated, and of varied interest. It is published by the "Workers' Monthly" Group. · Address: 95 Ash Road, Aldershot.

We should appreciate recent copies of the following Local Labour journals. If defunct we should be glad of authoritative word from the editors concerned, and if still running we should be glad of some particulars of circulation and finances. We fear that in the list many unrecorded tragedies have taken place, but comrades in the movement will assist us if they will write us saying what they know of the fate that has befallen any papers not now published. We are frequently asked for a full list of current Labour journals, and we believe that in no quarter is a thoroughly reliable current list of papers obtainable. We trust we shall not appeal for the aid of our readers in vain.

"The Newcomer" (Maldon Division).
"The Searchlight" (Ipswich).

- "Bournemouth Labour Quarterly." "Warrington and District Labour
- "Barrow Leader."
- "Hendon Sentinel." "Bradford Pioneer."
- "Crewe Recorder." "Forward and Lincolnshire Labour News."

"Ilford Argus."

"The Labour Chronicle" (Burslem).

"Leeds Weekly Citizen."

"Leicester Pioneer."

- "The Local Times" (Tunbridge
- "The Weekly Herald" (Chester-le-Street).
  - "The Altrincham Express."
  - "Central Hackney Courier."
  - "Coventry Labour News." "Darlington Labour News."
  - "Dewsbury Citizen."
    "Excelsior" (Bridgwater).

  - "Fulham Labour News."

  - "Gateshead Labour News."
    "The Hertfordshire Bulletin."
  - "The Labour Chronicle" (Anerley).
  - "Lancaster Forward."
  - "The Leamington Worker."
  - "The Messenger" (Leeds)
  - "The Pioneer" (Monthly), Woolwich.
  - "The Reading Citizen."
  - "Rochdale Labour News." "Sheffield Forward."
  - "Tees and Cleveland Pioneer."
  - "The Torch" (East Islington). "The Walthamstow Observer."
  - "Washington (Durham)
  - "The Watchman" (Plymouth).
  - "Watford Labour Gazette." "West Cumberland Labour Gazette."

"West Islington Observer."

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#### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

#### Books on Election Law.

Question.—Having been elected Hon. Agent for our Division, I should be glad if you could let me know the best and cheapest book to get with reference to

election law, etc.

Answer.—This is a question which has been repeatedly asked us, and we cannot be too positive about the fact that there is no book on the market dealing with election law which is right up-to-date. There is no publication so cheap and so suitable, in the first instance, for the use of Labour secretaries than the bound volumes of the "Labour Organiser," in which will be found the most up-to-date information, together with articles and explanations especially bearing on Labour Party problems. There is no really cheap comprehensive book on election law for the simple reason that a limited circulation implies a stiff price for any book published. As a standard work nothing beats Parker's "Election Agent and Returning Officer," published by Charles Knight and Co., price 63s. Since the last edition certain amendments of the law have been made, and copies of the "Labour Organiser" containing these amendments are a necessity.

As to registration law, fortunately Fraser's "Representation of the Peoples Act, 1918-1921" has been brought up to date by a supplement advertised on our cover. The price for the complete book is £2 2s. 9d. post free, and it is indispensable to those seriously studying registration work, A third aspect in which a book may be desirable is one for its general insight into the methods of conducting elections as apart from a statement of the law. Here we would advise Houston's "Modern Electioneering Practice," price 35s., published by Charles Knight and Co., which, however, should be read critic-

ally by Labour readers.

For a fourth aspect of the question embracing a general outlook of political organisation as such and the orthodox ways of conducting sundry elections, the reader might buy Seymour Lloyd's "Municipal Elections and How to Fight Them" and "Elections and How to Fight Them," published by Vacher and Sons at 3s. 6d. and 4s. 6d. respectively. Both these books should be read with exceeding care for they are entirely out of date in many legal respects having

been published as far ago as 1909. They afford an interesting light on the subject indicated, but they should not be bought by themselves as a guide.

#### Disqualification of Successful Candidate.

Question.—I should be pleased if you can give us some advice on the following case which has happened quite recently in this Division. We contested a Municipal by-election in one of our Wards, with the result that we were beaten. The opposing candidate was a builder named ———. It now transpires that at the last City Council meeting a minute of one of the Committees of the Council came up recommending that the firm of ——— be paid the sum of £342 in respect of alterations and repairs to some property of the Council. The candidate who was elected to the Council is a member of that firm. Incidentally, this gentleman was not introduced to the Council at their meeting, although an item was on the agenda for his introduction. We are of the opinion that there was a reason for his not taking his seat, and should be very pleased if you could give us some advice as to whether he was eligible to stand as a candidate, and if not, as to what is the best procedure for us to adopt. By the way, the sum mentioned is not, I understand, the final payment for the contract.

Answer.—At first sight the successful candidate mentioned would appear to be disqualified under Section 12 of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882.

"A person shall be disqualified for being elected and for being a councillor,

if and while he-

(a) Is an elective auditor or a revising assessor, or holds any office or place of profit, other than that of mayor or sheriff, in the gift or disposal of the council; or

(b) Is in holy orders, or the regular minister of a dissenting congregation; or (this sub-section is now

repealed-Ed., "L.O.")

(c) Has directly or indirectly, by himself or his partner, any share or interest in any contract or employment with, by, or on behalf of the council:

2. But a person shall not be so disqualified, or be deemed to have any share or interest in such a contract or employment, by reason only of his having any share or interest in-

(a) Any lease, sale, or purchase of land, or any agreement for the same;or

(b) Any agreement for the loan of money, or any security for the pay-

ment of money only; or

(c) Any newspaper in which any advertisement relating to the affairs of the borough or council is inserted; or

(d) Any company which contracts with the council for lighting or supplying with water or insuring against fire any part of the borough; or

(e) Any railway company, or any company incorporated by Act of Parliament or Royal Charter, or under

the Companies Act, 1862."

Now the question arises whether the successful candidate was actually a member of the firm in question at the time he was elected, and secondly, whether, if so, his firm still had "an interest" in the contract named. It is conceivable that the new councillor, acting on advice, divested himself of interest in his firm prior to his election, though under the circumstances this is unlikely. Even if he has done so, it may still be possible, though not easy, to prove an indirect interest.

From what we gather, however, of the circumstances, we think it more likely that the new councillor is relying on the fact that his contract was completed prior to his election, and that there remains only the question of payment. Common sense would suggest that interest in the contract still remains if payment for same was still due by the council. This is a point that has not been specifically decided in any proceedings for an election petition, but we think that the balance of legal opinion is that the firm is still interested in the contract until such time as payment has been discharged. It must be remembered that until payment is made there is always the question of a dispute arising, and it is difficult to see how a member of a firm could not be "interested in a contract" where a dispute might arise between his firm and the council.

The fact that the new councillor did not take his seat may be due to funk or it may be because he did not understand his position or perhaps was seeking legal advice. If he was under the impression that though disqualified at the time of election he might become qualified afterwards he would be working under a serious misapprehension. The disqualification, if any, existed at the time of his nomination, and the nomination was therefore bad. In fact, if the interest existed there was no valid election, and the seat is at this moment void. The elected person, if disqualified, is liable to a fine not exceeding £50 if he acts.

We advise our enquirer on this matter to at once interview the Town Clerk. It would probably be found that some approach has already been made to this officer on the matter. The view to be taken should be that the new councillor was disqualified for being elected, and that a vacancy actually exists. Under Section 66 of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, two burgesses may give notice of a vacancy in writing to the Mayor or Town Clerk, and if this course is taken the hands of the Council would be forced in the matter. In our opinion a resolution of the Council declaring a vacancy is not necessary providing the interest in the contract can be proved.

#### Mishandling an Interruptor.

Question.—One of our comrades was recently "chucked out" from a Tory meeting and very roughly handled. Does not the Public Meetings Act give any protection to a person treated like this?

Answer.—We are afraid not. The Public Meeting Act, 1908, was in fact conceived in a very different spirit. There is, of course, the remedy of a summons for assault provided the "chuckers-out" can be identified and a clear case established. Even then there is little justice to be got from an average bench of magistrates. The process of throwing out is frequently made the excuse for a vicious and frenzied assault upon an interrupter. It is notorious that during the Suffragette Campaign, Liberal stewards in particular distinguished themselves for their brutality and often obscenity in removing female interjectors.

The signs of the times are that the Public Meeting Act may be strengthened against persons who interrupt at meetings. There is a strong temptation always to correct the platform liar. Tory platform speeches are in the main devoted not to explanation of the Conservative Party's policy, if they possess one, but to diatribes and misrepresentations of the Labour position. One's sympathy goes out to the man who can

stand it no longer and interjects his corrections. Tory speakers invariably allege that interruptions are organised, a statement which every Labour secretary knows to be untrue. Nevertheless, an undertaking has been given by the present Government to consider what amendments might be made in the Public Meeting Act, 1908, to still further strengthen the hands of promoters of meetings against interrupters. It is not, of course, a far step from protecting and beatifying blacklegs to protecting and beatifying Tory mud merchants and slime-slingers.

Incidentally, the Act above referred to arose out of Mr. Austen Chamberlain's own experiences on a visit to his then constituency (North Worcestershire) in the autumn of 1908. writer was one of a young band who then gave Austen a pretty rough time in his constituency during a week's tour which the Member made for the purpose of making his then explanations. Austen got very cross at times, particularly as his tormentors took care to choose strategetic seats in the middle of the hall, where "chucking-out" could only result in a general mêlée. On his return to Parliament a kindly suggestion was thrown across the floor of the House that an agreed measure for preventing interruptions would receive facilities from the Government. Mr. Asquith characteristically obliged, and the result was the Public Meeting Act of that year. It has largely proved a dead measure, for few chairmen or political Parties care to incur the odium of initiating proceedings, and one has to prove that the person acts in a dis-orderly manner "for the purpose of preventing the transaction of business." This can hardly be proved of an interjector. The Act reads :-

"Any person who at a lawful public meeting acts in a disorderly manner for the purpose of preventing the transaction of the business for which the meeting was called together shall be guilty of an offence, and, if the offence is committed at a political meeting held in any parliamentary constituency between the date of the issue of a writ for the return of a member of Parliament for such constituency and the date at which a return to such writ is made, he shall be guilty of an illegal practice within the meaning of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883, and in any other case shall, on summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding five pounds, or to imprisonment not exceeding one month.

"Any person who incites others to commit an offence under this section shall be guilty of a like offence.

"This Act may be cited as the Public Meeting Act, 1908."

#### To Set up a Club.

Question.—We should be glad if you would publish in the "Labour Organiser" an article giving us some help on how to set up a licensed club. Is there any advice you can give us?

Answer .- We are sorry that we cannot see our way to publish an article on the lines indicated. We have yet to be convinced concerning the majority of licensed Labour Clubs that they are an asset to the Movement. We do not wish to be narrow or bigoted in our attitude on this matter, but we do know licensed clubs that have been established by enthusiasts with the best motives that have degenerated into mere drinking dens, and proved a real obstacle to the promotion of Socialist ideas. We do not make the sweeping assertion that all licensed Labour Clubs are bad. Some, indeed, we know are conducted on model lines, and the obvious temptations of the drink traffic But Labour are kept within limit. secretaries and organisers are well advised to move charily in the matter of the promotion of licensed clubs and not to let the temptation of a good income prove an inducement to set up an institution which they may afterwards regret. Club life on teetotal lines is less paying, but is more in harmony with the general ideas of our Movement, and good catering, with plentiful educational and social facilities, ought to be sufficient for a moderately successful club. On the other hand, if a license must be sought, then very rigid restrictions are advised by us both to ensure that the membership is confined to Labour Party circles and that abuses do not creep in.

#### A Winter Series of Meetings.

Question.—We are holding a series of meetings in our Labour Hall on Sunday evenings during the coming winter. The hall will accommodate about 100 persons and no more. We should be glad if you would give us some advice so as to help us in securing a good attendance during the whole period. What advertising do you advise?

Answer .- This is not an easy question to answer, so many factors are unmentioned. We know the size of the town, which has a population of about 25,000, but there is no indication from our questioner as to what sort of speakers are to be booked, or what is the general course to be taken at the meetings. One can hardly expect to cater much for the general public in a hall of this size, and "big" speakers seem to be out of the question. Is it set lectures that are intended with a Labour Church air about the conduct of the meetings, or are they to be purely public meetings? Again, do the hours of commencement coincide with the churches or do the meetings commence at 8 o'clock?

These factors all count when considering advertisement, and not the least important factor is who the speakers will be—whether local stalwarts or imported speakers with some sort of reputation; and will they mostly take the same subject by accident or bad management, or will they talk on

selected subjects?

There is always a danger of a set series of meetings in a small hall degenerating into a church atmosphere through the same people attending week after week. To the development of this kind of regular congregation, add the droniest of Labour hymns and dismal singing, and the affair degenerates till nobody but the converted attend (and the most hardened of these). At last, even God's elect get sick of the thing, and the church dies out.

Our comrades are well advised to avoid such contretemps. Contributory causes may be a sameness of speeches, lack of life in the conduct of the meetings, bad and unpunctual commencements and late closing. All the advertising in the world will not remedy these things, though a printed syllabus distributed at the commencement, and then forgotten, might make them worse.

We strongly advise that speakers should be booked, not merely because they can offer certain dates, but with some regard to change of subject and change of type. Two drony lecturers on succeeding Sundays might well kill the meeting for the third and better speaker, and, in "booking up," the convenience and variety of the programme should be the first consideration. It is not wise to book too far ahead, initial and maintained success should be aimed

at, and successful meetings will draw better and better speakers. Don't take someone just because there is a date to fill in. It is better to wait a bit.

We don't like syllabuses (or should it be syllabii?) They are tainted of the mutual improvement society; nobody keeps them unless it is as a guide

to what meetings to avoid.

A good advertisement outside the hall is the first essential in advertising. Posters will not be worth going to except perhaps some general window bills announcing that you hold regular Sunday meetings at such and such a time to which strangers are invited. These should be bought for stock and a supply dished out every few weeks.

Obviously with a seating capacity for too only, and with the meetings held at the Labour Hall, it is members and sympathisers who will mostly attend. These, then, should be circularised and invited to bring a friend. A few duplicated circulars sent out every few weeks through the halfpenny post will prove cheaper than handbills, and infinitely more effective. There will be a section who will attend regularly, but the great mass of sympathisers will flag in attendance, and it is the

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Š Phone 1194 W. W. Borrett, Manager Šasasasasasasas occasional reminder that will help to keep the attendance good, apart from such merit and reputation for your meetings as will arise from getting good

speakers and bright meetings.

On the latter point we advise up-todate vocal music. Leave the Victorian dirges alone; the dead may be glad of them. Put a few people on the platform, and vary them from meeting to meeting. Grace the platform with Careful choice of chairman is necessary, and the too frequent use of certain local speakers to follow the principal speaker should be avoided. The persistent questioner from one's own ranks should be discouraged; literature should be on sale, and you should attempt to sell enough occasionally buy something out of the profits that can be given away. Above all, remember that it takes good organisation and constant care to maintain an audience of even 100 persons over a long period, but variety and interest will do the trick where great costs in advertising might fail.

#### HINTS TO SUB-AGENTS ON ARRANGING MEETINGS.

Ascertain from the Chief Agent how many meetings you may have.

Get to know the best places for meet-

ings and fix these up at once.

You are entitled on behalf of your candidate to the use, for a public meeting, of a room in any public elementary school in your area, at reasonable times between the issue of the writ and the day of the poll, at the cost of any actual and necessary expense of preparation, lighting, heating and cleaning.

If you have an early meeting in each parish you can get a rousing meeting in again a night or so before the poll. Fix up all meetings through the Central

Committee Room.

Any person disturbing a lawful public meeting with the intention of preventing the carrying out of the purpose for which the meeting is held, is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction, and if the meeting is held between the issue of the writ and date of return of election the offence is an illegal practice.

Any person inciting another to commit the offence is guilty of a like

offence.

Always get the most influential local man in the chair. Impress upon him to be brief. Draw up the Agenda and see that it is not altered.

If you have help from outside, give the stranger a good place in the pro-gramme. Don't let your meetings be too long. In country parishes close where possible by 9.30.

Finish up with a good speaker—never

with a bad one.

Don't speak yourself unless absolutely obliged to.

Send to the Head Agent prompt information of all Public Meetings held by your opponents in the district under your charge; preferably a handbill. Those which the opposing candidate is announced to attend should be specially notified, and if a reliable report of the speeches be obtained, steps can be taken to answer any point requiring answers,

Also send specimens of all literature

issued by the opposition.

Communicate the names and origin of those at work for your opponents who do not belong to the neighbourhood. -From "The Sub-Agent's Guide," by H. F. Oldman. Published by Boughton and Son, Ltd., Thetford, Norfolk. Price 9d.

"A high and responsible position in the Labour Party" is the description given by the "Sunday Worker" to the Labour agency at Croydon held by Mr. H. S. Redgrove, B.Sc. (President of the Teachers' Labour League). Agents may like to file this description of their office, for the "Sunday Worker" and its sort have not always been so honest in their tribute to the important services rendered by Labour agents to the Labour Party.

We are interested to note that the "Gloucester Observer," a local paper which, with several changes of editorship and in size, has been running for some years, has now been renamed the "Gloucestershire Labour Observer," and an attempt is being made to extend the circulation throughout the county. This is a very desirable object, and Gloucester presents many advantages as a centre for the publication of a county Labour newspaper. We trust the various Divisional and Local Labour Parties concerned will co-operate with the present editor, Mr. J. H. Round (Labour Agent), of Ruskin Hall, The Cross, Gloucester, in his efforts to provide the paper with a paying circulation throughout the county. We note that a good deal of local and district matter now finds its way into the paper.

At the request of several readers we propose to reprint certain articles that appeared in our earliest issues and which have naturally not been read by the bulk of our present readers. The two following articles were published in 1921.

#### FINDING THE "MONEY-RAISER." An Article We are Ashamed of.

With the development of the Labour Party's wonderful network of local organisation, the necessity of raising more money for the work becomes an increasing anxiety to those responsible. Till a great change—and possibly a change of heart, too—comes over the policy of the vast majority of the trade unions, I am afraid we shall still see money squandered on the so-called "industrial" field that utilised scientifically on the political field could bring surer and quicker results. hopeless misapplication of the funds and energies of the unions to blind-alley efforts is yet a lesson, despite plain writing on the wall, that has to get home. So while the ploughing of the sands goes on, stout hearts in local parties must seek to "raise the wind."

Now the man who can do that is born to it. The wind-raiser is not made. Nor is the good agent or secretary necessarily a good hand at scooping in the shekels any more than it follows that the agent or secretary in office is a success at his job because he can raise money. Men and women who can raise the wind are the salt of the earth to local Parties-pardon to the intellectuals-but they are not necessarily good leaders, good advisers, aye, and I venture, not necessarily altogether sound on every "ism."

Money-raisers I have known are of all sorts. There is the organising and advertising genius, with a powerful drive and soul that's grit all through, who can carry out big things without a crash, and yield at the end a glittering crop of bawbees. That man is scarce. If you've got one in your Party marry him off quickly, buy him a house, and pray that his quiver may be full, so that he shall have ties that will keep him long in the land, etc., etc.

There is the man, too, who is a dabster at selling tickets. I have never succeeded at this; believe me, I have not the cheek. But there are men who are never happy unless selling scraps of paper for whist drives, draws, etc.,

and the peace and plentitude of the Party can really best be secured by catering for their happiness, and by keeping that pot always boiling.

The organiser with an intuition will never fail to spot the incipient symptoms of the ticket-selling mania in any member of the Party. He will say nothing, but it is his business to let the patient have the disease hot and plenty. He will encourage and incite, and watch the behaviour of his colleague. Just as they say it is a disease that first creates the pearl in the shell of the oyster, so will he, out of a horrid and eradicable capitalist kink, develop a jewel of rare value. Ticket sellers must be treated with discretion. Some men are very vain, not because they are ticket sellers, but because they are men. A vain ticket seller should be told his score, and allowed to have his full throat of crowing. He will go one better next time. Some fellows are cantankerous, not because they are ticket sellers, but because it is a human virtue that men can "go cussed" sometimes. Fancy a world of amiable people! What a chamber of horrors to have to organise! The cantankerous ticket seller is an uncertain starter. You must tell him the truth diplomatically. He may jib if he thinks he is left to do all the selling. On the other hand, he may need a fairy tale about how well someone else is doing before you can sufficiently excite his spleen to get him going. Be diplomatic.

There is one garrulous old gentleman of my acquaintance who joined the Party a year or two ago. I gather it's a sort of deathbed repentance, because for a working man he is phenomenally rich. I guess he has ground the noses of not a few. Anyway, he is a lovely money-raiser, and I mention him because he is a type. He is really great on subscription lists. No man ever worked harder on a list than he. It is usual for him to head the list with a substantial instalment of his conscience money-he's been a landlord among other things-and away he goes. His talking is incessant and there is only one relief-to pay up and give him another name to whom he

depart instantly.

Besides the generation of scar moneyraisers to whom I have referred, there are scores of people in almost all constituencies who are more or less good at this or that aspect of social

effort and raising the wind. Only too often these people, though in general agreement, find little interest in the ordinary propaganda and discussions of the Party. There is a tendency for them to break away and seek their social expression in other movements and interests. This article after all is quite serious. Is it not worth while to study and cultivate the material at hand, and to remember that the new social order will not be an exclusive era of high-pitched sentiments, lofty speeches, and intellectual fag, but a life worth attempting even now of joyous association and something more than austere propaganda? A realisation of this will incidentally solve some of our financial problems, for it is easier to get 5,000 banded to the Party in human sympathy and daily living than to get fifty over the pons asinorum of the A.B.C. of Socialism The money-raiser is happiest as the John the Baptist of social happenings. Look out for him, and let him have his fling.

THE-

(On second thoughts the above shall remain anonymous.)

#### THE LITERATURE STALL.

#### How to Make Money and Members.

If we could get a census of Local Parties showing how many run literature stalls or literature departments, we should get an eye-opening discovery of neglected opportunities. Contrasting somewhat with the I.L.P., which has always set a splendid example of how to propagate in this direction, the personnel of Local Labour Parties is usually less aggressively propagandist, and its delegates are practised more in branch routine and administration than in lines of propaganda. Yet Labour in the constituencies has got to wake up on this matter. There is no surer way of securing a convert than to get him to buy a pamphlet. Even one's own members may profit therefrom, too.

The sale of literature in the hands of a live committee can be made a considerable source of income. I have known over £20 sold at quite an ordinary-sized town's meeting, and bumper sales at really live demonstrations. This spells income, but what is more, it means seed sown that will flower and bear fruit greatly to the

Party's prosperity. Literature makes converts, where nothing else could carry conviction. It answers the doubter and convinces the thoughtful. No other weapon so well answers the half-truths and misrepresentations of

rubbishy journals.

In the first place, however, not everyone knows what to sell or how to get it. Ignorance of the Labour Party's own publications is widespread. A complete set is worth while for the education of your committee on what to sell. There is a wide range of subjects, and at some meetings literally dozens of certain publications could be sold. After the Party's own stock there are other publications to be considered. Both the I.L.P. and the Fabian Society have stuff of rare propagandist and educational value. educational value. These bodies are affiliated to the Labour Party, and their literature mostly harmonises with the Party's policy. This is important. No Local Labour Party has a right to sell the literature of Labour's enemies and Labour's critics, and of impossibilist freaks and cranks, or to place on sale on its stalls literature bearing on highly controversial questions, religious or social, regarding which confusion might arise as to whether the publications represented an official view, or not.

This point is important, and it is time greater vigilance was exercisedand it ought to be exercised by Local Parties. There is no desire to exert a censorship over what shall be read, but on a Party stall only what is in harmony with Party policy should be admitted. I have known several instances of literature bought from a professed Labour stall which has actually fought off earnest inquirers who were repulsed by the views expressed. I have known worse, even, than that. I have seen stalls at Labour Party meetings with not one single Labour Party publication upon them, but chock full of the literature of insanity and books and pamphlets to mislead. Better, far better, no stall at all, for mischief was being done. It is true also that literature is sometimes bought for its title, and not because it is known what

it contains.

Another point. Labour Parties should "do" their own meetings. Whoever else sells literature the Labour Party organisation is foolish to stand aside. It is its function to sell its literature. It should do its own work. Furthermore, if an unwise choice has been made by your own literature secretary or committee the remedy is in the Party's hands. If, however, the literature stall is farmed out there is no control over what is sold. Your Party may be misrepresented by irresponsible fools to no end.

It is wonderful what Pluck will do in politics. Some Local Parties want pluck. The same quality is needed in a literature seller. Literature selling is really easy, particularly in the wait before a meeting commences. At one time I used to enjoy this pastime. I took a turn for a change a day or two ago. I took 13s., and my fair competitor took 4d. But absolutely the only difference was that I asked people to buy; the lady waited. It just lies there. People will handle all you've got on the stall, and won't buy. But push, and you will sell out. It really is the only way to sell.

Form of resolution for next meeting: move that a Literature Committee be appointed, to consist of four persons and a secretary, and that this committee be instructed to prepare plans for the sale of Labour literature by the Party, and report at next meeting. Meantime, the committee shall be authorised to invest a sum not exceeding the purchase of suitable literature."

#### MUNICIPAL PROPERTY FOR POLITICAL USE.

We extract the following from the current issue of the "London News." We think our readers will agree with the view expressed by the editor of that journal on the problem which has been presented to him.

"At a recent meeting of the Bethnal Green Borough Council, a discussion took place upon an objection which had been received to the use of municipal vehicles for political processions and party propaganda purposes.

"We have been asked to express an

opinion upon the question.

"Our own view is that it is improper for property which is the common possession of all the citizens to be handed over for the use of a political party for party purposes. We have only to ask ourselves what our view would be if municipal vehicles were used in Tory brewers' processions against licensing reform or were handed over to sectional anti-Labour bodies for their own purpose.

"We still adhere to the Socialist principle which says that common property is common property, and that we ought not ourselves to do those things to which we should strongly object if done by our political opponents,

"In the end, such practices as those indicated are injurious to the Labour Party because they outrage reasonable fair play; and in any case, judged by any decent standard of political

morality, they are wrong.

"Besides, such action is inviting difficulties with the auditor on an issue where general public opinion would, quite properly, be against those using public property for party purposes."

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